

Health & Safety

Please be aware of health and safety risks related to cleaning up sewage. Protect your family, pets and self by taking precautions, or consider hiring a professional cleanup company. Do not allow children or pets to play in contaminated areas.

Generally, items exposed to sewage should be discarded for health reasons. It is important to talk with your insurance agent about how to document damage and begin repairs.

After completing the clean-up, wash your hands thoroughly and launder clothes and shoes separate from other clothing. Sewage contains hazardous 'germs' that can be transmitted by touching contaminated items or tracking them into uncontaminated areas on shoes.

Avoid skin contact with sewer water, especially at your mouth, eyes, nose, or the site of any cuts or sores. Keep cuts and sores clean and covered. If you should suffer a cut while cleaning, consider getting a tetanus shot.

Do not eat or drink anything exposed to sewer water.

Sewage backups are often related to your property's **side sewer**. Homeowners and business owners are responsible for maintaining and repairing their side sewers, the private section of pipe that carries wastewater from their home or building's plumbing system to the public sewer main.

SPU crews will respond to relieve blockages in the main line but are not authorized to enter residences to clean-up sewage backups.

Information on trouble-shooting your side sewer can be found on our website by visiting:

www.seattle.gov/util/sidesewer

Call 206-684-3000 for customer service.

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Cleaning Up Sewage Spills

Proper responses to sewer backups can greatly minimize losses from negative health effects and property damage.

Every backup is unique and will require different responses, but there are some universal principles that can be applied to all situations.

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Clean-Up

Before entering the affected area, the potential for electrical shock hazards and gas leaks must be assessed.

Turn off the circuit breakers supplying electricity to the area. Once power is off, unplug all electrical appliances and small electrical devices on wet floor or in other wet areas.



If electric motors, wiring or insulation have been saturated, have a qualified service technician remove the motor, dry it, and inspect for damage before plugging it back in and turning it on.

Do not use any electrical equipment while standing in water.

Turn off the gas (or other fuel source) to your furnace or heater and hot water heater.

Avoid flushing toilets or using other water connected to appliances or fixtures. The discharge from these items may back up into the basement.

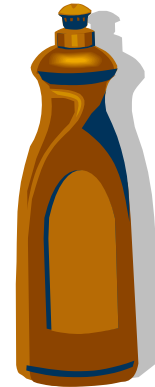


Do not attempt to stop the flow of a sewer backup through the floor drain or any other sewer drain. Any added obstruction could cause serious damage or rupture to your household sewer drainage system.

Due to the unsanitary nature of sewage, you must clean and disinfect all areas where the backup occurred.

Wear protective clothing such as rubber boots, gloves and eye protection.

All floor surfaces have to be completely cleaned and decontaminated with germicides effective against E. Coli, such as Simple Green products, dish detergents or bleach.



NEVER MIX BLEACH AND AMMONIA - IT PRODUCES DANGEROUS CHLORINE GAS!

Hard surfaces, such as hardwood floors, linoleum, concrete, and wood moldings need to be cleaned with hot water and a mild dish detergent, and then rinsed with a solution of 8 tablespoons of liquid household bleach to one gallon of water. Let the surface air dry.

Sanitize and repair, or remove and discard, paneling, wallboard or wall coverings within 24 hours. Removing the wall board allows air to circulate around the wood studs so that they dry.